

# **CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION ALTERNATIVE STAGING OF BRAAM PANEL IMPROVEMENTS**

## **BUILDING THE FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE CHANGE**

Children's Administration (CA) wants reform efforts to be successful and sustainable. The Braam Design and Specification Report focuses on discrete strategies which may not be sufficient in and of themselves to meet and sustain improvements over time. While these strategies, reflected in the Action Steps, address performance improvement in the important area of foster care, they are not adequate by themselves to move the entire child welfare system forward.

The key building blocks to a strong foundation which result in lasting improvement in child welfare services include:

- **Redesign Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Child Protective Services (CPS)**

There is no clear role separation for CPS and CWS, particularly around the delivery of on-going services. The redesign involves developing a CPS model that focuses on safety, investigations and risk assessment. The redesign also involves developing a new in-home CWS program to provide on-going services to children and families in their own homes. Another component of the redesign is earlier transfer of dependency cases to the CWS out-of-home program so that efforts to achieve permanency can begin as soon as a child is placed in care.

- **Develop and implement a practice model**

To ensure consistency of practice, engagement of children and families, and improved quality of services CA needs to develop a new practice model. The practice model will provide a clinical framework for practice, including:

- Core Values
- Core Practice Principles
- Core Casework Practice Components
- Practice standards
- Proven Models for Engaging Families and Effecting Change
- Core Competencies
- Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework
- Streamlined Policies and Procedures

The practice model will impact all staff and services delivered by CA. It will also require a redevelopment of the CA training academy curriculum. Engaging and training all staff in the new practice model is a major undertaking. It requires a focused approach, much time and effort.

Both internal and external stakeholders have identified the development of a practice model as a key component to the reform efforts needed to achieve and sustain outcomes for children and families.

- **Develop and implement a new State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)**

The current case and management information system (CAMIS) has become obsolete and is inadequate to meet case management, data and accountability requirements necessary to support good practice, the CPS/CWS redesign and quality assurance activities. It needs to be replaced. The new information system must be designed carefully and in concert with the development of the practice model.

- **Improve contracted services and business practices**

About 60 percent of CA's resources are service dollars. About one-half of these funds are for purchased client professional services and the other half are for reimbursement to licensed foster parents and to support families adopting children with special needs. The contract review process involves a comprehensive assessment of all contracts to ensure fiscal accountability, alignment with the CA's mission and priorities, and maximum effectiveness. The contract review includes identifying and moving forward with performance-based contracts and evidence-based practices. It is a major undertaking that requires focus and attention throughout the next 12-18 months.

- **Develop and implement a new financial management model**

The administration has embarked on revamping the way it conducts its business. This will help to effectively manage resources to support field operations, to increase accountability and to better forecast future need for resources. Building on the work being done to develop a new information system and a new practice model, the administration is creating a "network" among its primary business centers.

- **Change the culture of the organization**

Changing the service delivery model or developing a practice model will not in isolation result in sustainable improvements. Work also needs to be done to make a fundamental change in the culture of the organization. The CA has recently begun a year long effort with the Boeing Company to examine and improve our structure, management and organizational culture. Included in this is a discussion of our values and how we operationalize them. Efforts are also underway to strengthen methods of communication with our stakeholders and partners.

The building of a strong foundation requires time, concentrated focus and resources. Investing in these changes creates a “new” administration with a very different way of doing business and providing child welfare services. Investing in a strong foundation provides the opportunity to be proactive in developing a service system with the capacity to sustain improved performance. Building the right foundation will take up to 24 months of concentrated work and on-going attention thereafter. Focusing only on implementing the Braam Design and Specification Report, completing the Action Steps, and achieving the Benchmarks within the proposed timeframes will significantly limit the CA’s ability to put a new foundation in place to address the needs of the entire system.

## **MANAGING MULTIPLE IMPROVEMENT AGENDAS**

The Braam settlement is one of several important change drivers. It focuses on one area of child welfare practice—children in out-of-home care. Additional drivers include:

- Quicker response to child abuse and neglect and more frequent visits
- The Child and Family Service Program Improvement Plan
- The new neglect legislation effective January 2007
- Additional legislation from previous and future legislative sessions
- Achieving accreditation of all 44 CA field offices

### **Quicker Response to Child Abuse and Neglect and More Frequent Visits**

The governor has declared child safety is the top priority for all children. Children at risk in their own homes are generally at greater risk of abuse and neglect than children in out of home care. To improve child safety the governor has directed that children at risk be seen more quickly and more frequently. Specifically the governor’s mandates are: children at imminent risk are seen within 24 hours of referrals; all other children referred because of abuse or neglect are seen within 72 hours of referral; thereafter children are visited every 30 days. This is consistent with the federal Child and Family Service Review.

Implementing these mandates requires a re-alignment of resources. Additional resources are required to implement face-to-face visits with children every 30 days. Focusing on and achieving a high performance level related to these child safety priorities requires consistent and ongoing attention of the Administration and alignment of resources.

### **The Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan**

The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) are mandated by federal legislation. The Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, is responsible for conducting these reviews and monitoring implementation of Program Improvement Plans (PIP). All states are reviewed against federal performance measures and standards. States not meeting these measures are required to develop and implement an agreed upon two-year PIP. States are subject to re-review following

completion of their PIP. No state met all of the federal performance measures and all were required to implement a PIP.

The Washington State CFSR was conducted in November 2003 and the report finalized in February 2004. The Washington State PIP period is October 1, 2004 to September 2006. During this period, the state is required to meet performance targets related to measures where the state was substantially not in conformity. In addition CA is required to complete actions steps which are designed to improve performance.

The CFSR requires states to meet federal standards in the following areas:

- 23 case review measures related to safety, permanency and child and family well-being
- 6 data outcomes related to safety and permanency
- 7 systemic factors which support outcomes

Some of the CFSR permanency measures relate to items in the Braam report, such as placement stability. Washington State has completed the first year of its PIP which includes 96 action steps. Completing the PIP action steps and achieving the performance levels requires sustained focus and effort. Considerable work remains to be done to successfully complete the PIP by September 2006 and failure to do so may result in fiscal penalties. However, successful completion of the current PIP does not conclude the improvement work. The State will be re-reviewed again in 2007 and a new PIP will be required to complete improvements and achieve federal performance standards. Meeting the federal CFSR performance standards is an ongoing State responsibility and cannot be ignored or deferred.

### **The New Neglect Legislation**

Effective January 2007 new legislation related to child neglect takes effect. The new legislation provides a broader definition of neglect including cumulative harm. The legislation authorizes the Department to investigate, provide voluntary services, or take involuntary court ordered intervention to protect children from neglect. Implementation of this legislation requires CA to do considerable planning and work during 2006, including developing WACS, policies, new assessment tools, training 1400 staff, training mandated reporters, information and data requirements, and evidence based contracted services. Successful implementation of the new legislation will require immediate and on-going focus, effort and resources.

### **Implementing New Legislation**

Each legislative session has the potential for additional legislation that needs to be implemented. CA must maintain the capacity to implement new legislation as required.

## **Accreditation**

The CA, with legislative support, has embarked on a process of achieving accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA). The COA accreditation process requires extensive staff time to assess current practice against the 700 COA standards, make the necessary changes, and successfully complete the COA on-site review. To date, 20 field offices have passed their accreditation reviews.<sup>1</sup> The remaining 24 offices are in the process of preparing for accreditation. Offices which meet accreditation standards must be re-accredited every four years.

The Braam Design and Specification Report includes 73 professional standards. Almost all of the standards listed are Council On Accreditation standards. All of the standards are from the COA 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the standards. These standards are currently being field tested and have not yet been adopted. The rating indicators for these standards have not been distributed by COA, so it is difficult to determine the full implications or requirements for being in compliance with these standards. Also, it is unknown at this time which of these standards are considered mandatory, critical, or third order standards.

The Braam Panel is holding the CA to COA standards that do not apply to us. Eight of the proposed professional standards in the report relate to treatment foster care. CA does not directly deliver treatment foster care services and is not being accredited for this service. As a result COA does not require the Administration to meet treatment foster care standards.

In addition, the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Edition standard CPS 5.01 is problematic and has not yet been adopted. Please refer to the letter dated December 20, 2005, from Mr. Steve Hassett which explores our concerns with the proposed COA Professional Standards more fully.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSED BRAAM DESIGN AND SPECIFICATION REPORT**

It is exceedingly difficult for any administration to successfully complete multiple improvement agendas. Agencies, and especially field staff to whom most of the day to day improvements fall, can only focus on and sustain a limited number of changes at any one time. The Braam draft report adds at least 50 performance measures and nearly 100 action steps to an already overwhelming change agenda.

The Braam Design and Specification Report outlines the performance levels to be met and the action steps to be completed by the Department by July 2011. Each of the performance measures include annual benchmarks to be achieved. Baselines for all measures are to be established by June 2006. The report also requires the action steps to be completed within specific timeframes. Some of the Actions Steps do not have timelines associated with them.

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<sup>1</sup> Accreditation does not imply all 700 COA standards were met.

The staging of these baselines, action steps and performance measures is as follows:

### **January-June 2006 Requirements**

#### **Baselines**

- The report includes the development of 41 baseline measures.
- Thirty-two baseline measurements are to be completed January-June 2006.
- Baselines will be established after reviewing performance during 2004 and 2005.

This requires extensive work to obtain the required data. Not all of the data is readily available through the current information system. Design work will be necessary to obtain some data, and hand counts will be required to obtain others.

Data for the performance measures and benchmarks are to be reported on a state, regional and local office level. This creates additional workload.

#### **Action Steps**

- Approximately 14 action steps are required to be completed in FY2005 and 37 in FY2006.

### **FY 2007 Requirements**

Number of Baselines to be Developed	7
Number of Action Steps to be Completed – Estimated	20
Number of Performance Measures to be Reached	40

#### **Performance Measures**

- Improvement is required regarding 40 performance measures

Number of Measures Requiring 75% Performance	1
Number of Measures Requiring 90% Performance	19
Number of Measures Requiring 95% Performance	2
Number of Measures Requiring 100% Performance	3
Number of Measures Requiring 5% Improvement	1
Number of Measures Requiring 20% Improvement	3
Number of Measures Requiring 25% Improvement	3
Number of Measures Requiring 10% Improvement	6
Number of Measures to be Determined	2

## **FY 2008 Requirements**

Number of Baselines to be Developed	2
Number of Action Steps to be Completed - Estimated	5
Number of Performance Measures to be Reached	43

### Performance Measures

- Improvement is required regarding 43 performance measures

Number of Measures Requiring 85% Performance	1
Number of Measures Requiring 95% Performance	17
Number of Measures Requiring 100% Performance	5
Number of Measures Requiring 5% Improvement	3
Number of Measures Requiring 10% Improvement	10
Number of Measures Requiring 15% Improvement	1
Number of Measures Requiring 20% Improvement	2
Number of Measures Requiring 25% Improvement	3
Other Measure	1

## **FY 2009 Requirements**

### Performance Measures

- Improvement is required regarding 25 performance measures (This assumes that all of the performance benchmarks required for FY 2007 and FY 2008 have been met)

Number of Measures Requiring 50% Performance	1
Number of Measures Requiring 95% Performance	1
Number of Measures Requiring 5% Improvement	3
Number of Measures Requiring 10% Improvement	14
Number of Measures Requiring 20% Improvement	2
Number of Measures Requiring 25% Improvement	3
Other Measure	1

## **FY 2010 Requirements**

### Performance Measures

- Improvement is required regarding 21 performance measures (This assumes that all of the performance bench marks required for FY 2007, FY 2008 and FY 2009 have been met)

Number of Measures Requiring 75% Performance	1
Number of Measures Requiring 5% Improvement	3
Number of Measures Requiring 10% Improvement	11
Number of Measures Requiring 20% Improvement	2
Number of Measures Requiring 25% Improvement	3
Other Measure	1

### **FY 2011 Requirements**

#### **Performance Measures**

- Improvement is required regarding 21 performance measures (This assumes that all of the performance bench marks required for FY 2007, FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY2010 have been met)

Number of Measures Requiring 95% Performance	1
Number of Measures Requiring 5% Improvement	3
Number of Measures Requiring 10% Improvement	11
Number of Measures Requiring 20% Improvement	2
Number of Measures Requiring 25% Improvement	3
Other Measure	1

### **Summary of Requirements**

Item	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
No of Baselines	32	7	2			
No of Action Steps	17	19	10			
No of Performance Measures		40	43	25	21	21

Performance benchmarks are front end loaded. Most of the benchmarks occur in FY 2007 and FY 2008. This is compounded by the fact that the largest improvements are also expected to occur within this same timeframe. The expectation is that the Administration can move forward and make substantial change and improvements in all areas of the Braam Settlement Agreement simultaneously and while meeting all other change obligations and any new legislation. The Administration does not have the capacity to meet the proposed improvement schedule. Also, with the majority of the Braam improvements occurring in the remainder of FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008, they



parallel the PIP improvements, the introduction of the new neglect legislation, and the development of the foundation to support sustainable change.

## **AN ALTERNATIVE STAGING OF BRAAM PANEL IMPROVEMENTS**

Organizational capacity is the ability to successfully apply skills and resources to accomplish goals and meet expectations. Organizations require capacity to continue their day-to-day operations. Operations must continue while change agendas are implemented. In addition, organizations require adaptive capacity which is the capacity to implement new programs, services, and other changes. Organizational resources are limited. Organizations can successfully manage only a limited number of systemic changes or improve performance on a fixed number of items at any one time. The federal PIP requires CA to make incremental but significant change in performance related to 23 performance measures. This is a major challenge. While significant improvement has been made CA has not yet achieved the required benchmarks for all 23 measures.

Achieving sustainable change while maintaining operational capacity requires that changes and performance expectations be phased in.

The Children's Administration proposes an alternative approach to staging the reforms and performance improvements outlined in the Braam Design and Specification Report.

This staging approach is based on the following:

1. A system of prioritization with immediate health and safety as the highest priority beginning with the Governor's safety mandates
2. A recognition that not all of the proposed improvements can successfully be done quickly or simultaneously
3. A process which provides opportunity next fiscal year to develop the foundation for sustainable improvement by the end of FY2008
4. A recognition of the state legislative and budgetary cycle
5. Maintenance of capacity to successfully implement the Governor's requirements, PIP and other improvement priorities.

### **Implementation Staged By Priority**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>FY 06</b>	<b>FY 07</b>	<b>FY 08</b>	<b>FY 09</b>	<b>FY 10</b>	<b>FY 11</b>	<b>FY 12 &amp; On-going</b>
Immediate Health and Safety	Begin	X	X	X	X	X	
Stability of Placement and Connections		Begin	X	X	X	X	
Remediation			Begin	X	X	X	X
Growth and Development				Begin	X	X	X

### Development of Baselines

<b>Baselines</b>	<b>FY 06</b>	<b>FY 07</b>	<b>FY 08</b>	<b>FY 09</b>	<b>FY 10</b>	<b>FY 11</b>	<b>FY 12</b>
Safety	6	1					
Stability		9					
Remediation			17				
Development				8			

### Scheduling of Performance Benchmarks

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>FY 06</b>	<b>FY 07</b>	<b>FY 08</b>	<b>FY 09</b>	<b>FY 10</b>	<b>FY 11</b>	<b>FY 12</b>
Safety		8	7	6	6	6	
Stability			9	9	9	8	7
Remediation				17	20	2	2
Development					8	8	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>

This staging plan reduces the front end impact and spreads out the development of the baselines and the meeting of performance benchmarks. The most concentrated performance expectations would occur in FY2009 and FY2010, allowing for time to put in place the foundation necessary to support sustained improvement. The proposed staging allows time for any additional resources that may be provided in the 2007-2009 biennial budget to achieve the benchmarks beginning FY 2009 and onwards. It also allows the Panel, plaintiff's attorneys and the Department to do better planning and analysis of how well the implementation is going and adjust the schedule in a planned way that addresses available resources and outcomes being achieved.

See the attached spread sheet for specific details of the proposed alternative staging plan.